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ABSTRACT

Australia has played a very active role in promoting and developing school librarianship on an international basis. Most aid projects in school library development have been in the Asia/Pacific region, but programs have been implemented in other areas as well. The largest school library development project that has been carried out by Australians is the UNESCO School Libraries in Oceania Project that was launched by UNESCO in 1978 and has continued since then. Australians are active participants in international library organizations such as the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL). The paper describes Australians' participation in those organizations, the UNESCO School Library Project in Vanuatu, and literacy programs for public libraries in the Southwest Pacific--the Cook Islands public and school library services. The interaction between Australian school library educators and their overseas colleagues has proven to be of mutual benefit. While Australians have been able to share their expertise with others, they have also become richer by developing an understanding of library and education systems in other countries and have been able to develop a deeper appreciation of other cultures. (SWC)

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Australia's Contribution to International School Librarianship

by
Joe Hallein, Fay Nicholson, Judy Phillips, and Barbara Posten-Anderson

Australia has played a very active role in promoting and developing school librarianship on a international basis. Most of our aid projects in school library development have been in the Asia/Pacific region but programs have been carried out in other areas as well. The largest school library development project that has been carried out by Australians is the UNESCO School Libraries in Oceania Project that was launched by UNESCO in 1978 and has continued for thirteen years. A number of visits were carried out to investigate the state of school libraries in the southwest Pacific and to make recommendations to UNESCO for projects to help develop school library programs. Lawrence McGraw, Margaret Trask, Barbara Posten-Anderson, and Joe Hallein visited a number of South Pacific nations during the 1970s and 80s. Workshops for developing school library education programs were conducted by the project, and a group of Australian library educators prepared two courses for training teachers in the use of libraries, and for training school librarians. The courses, designed for both traditional class rooms and distance education, were published by UNESCO in 1989.

A regional meeting of librarians and educators from the Pacific region was held in Suva, Jiji in November 1983. The purpose of this UNESCO-funded meeting was to examine the course material to see if it met the needs of the region. Given the green light, it was then introduced into teacher education programs across the southwest Pacific.

In order to ensure that each country had qualified people to teach the course, UNESCO also sponsored a workshop in Sydney, Australia, in July-August, 1985 for sixteen librarians and teacher educators from ten Pacific nations. Par-ticipants were given detailed notes on teaching specific educational resources. Training pro-grams were also conducted for educators and librarians in western Samoa in 1986 and in Vanuatu in 1989 and 1990 with a further course held in 1991 The Vanuatu courses em-phasized easily accessible and inexpensive re-sources such as puppets, drama and movement, and book reports and discussion by teachers, as well as in-service training for librarians. More details of the Vanuatu project will be presented later in the paper.

Australian input to school library development has also taken placae as part of major educational development projects om the region. Some of these have been multi-lateral programs sponsored by agencies such as the World Bank which provided funding for the Solomon Islands Primary Education Expansion Project from 1983 to 1985. As part of this project provincial educational resource centers were established and basic ref-erence collections were supplied to schools. Project consultant, Joe Hallein, also conducted training courses for primary school educators in the effective use of educational resources. This project as well as other such as the STEP project in western Samoa also established libraries in the teacher training colleges and therefore exposed future teachers to the benefits of using a range of educational resources in classroom teaching.

Australia also contributes to school library development in the Pacific region as part of its programs to support international efforts such as International Library Year.

The Australian International Development Assistance Bureau has provided courses for educators from many countries on libraries and educational resources. Many of these are held at the Centre for Pacific Development and Training in Sydney. While many of these are held for participants from the Pacific region some, such as the course on educational resources held in 1982, had eleven African, Asian, and Pacific countries. The course was run by AIDAB in conjunction with staff from the School of Library Information Studies at the then Kuringai CAE. The International Development Program of the Australian University System has also been active in providing library development assistance. While most of its programs are designed to assist university libraries, it has also provided assistance to library schools. Some of the library school projects such as those held in conjunction with the University of Papua New Guinea are designed to improve training programs for teacher librarians.

Overseas school library practice placements for Australian school librarianship students have also proven to be valuable source of international school library development. Both the

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University of Technology, Sydney and Monash University, Gippsland Campus have taken students to Vanuatu for school library practice and this year the Monash students did a month-long program in Thailand.

Australians have been active participants in international library organizations such as the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL).

Contributions to these two associations are made at two levels--officially through representation by professional associations, and by the individuals through participation in committees, conferences, research projects, and contributions to publications.

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions is governed by an elected board. Our National Librarian, Warren Horton, is currently a member of the board. Input to the Association is largely made through the sections and round tables which represent the specific interest groups of the profession. One of the sections represents school libraries, and the current president is Lucille Thomas who is also president of IASL. Contributions to school librarianship are also made through other sections and round tables such as the Research and Education Sections and the Continuing Pro-fessional Education Round Table. A current re-search project by Dr. Sigrun Hannesdottir on guidelines for undertaking national surveys on school librarianship is directly relevant, and the Continuing Professional Education Round Table pre-conference in Barcelona this year included areas of interest to school librarianship.

IFLA holds a conference annually in a different country. In 1988 the conference was in Sydney, Australia. This arrangement enables participants to gain greater information on the host country and greater participation by people from that country in international activities. Many sections hold smaller conferences and seminars in association with IFLA. This year the School Section in association with UNESCO held a five-day pre-conference seminar prior to the IFLA conference in Barcelona. Individual Australian teacher librarians have contributed papers to IFLA activities over many years and this year Fay Nicholson contributed as a resource person to the pre-conference attended by delegates from over twenty developing countries.

IFLA as an association representing librarianship is accredited by various international associations such as UNESCO. Combined projects have been undertaken in school librarianship in many countries including Oceania.

The International Association of School Librarianship

The International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) is based on a wide membership of people interested in school libraries and librarianship and include school librarians, educators, publishers, institutions, and associations. Elected officers and directors representing regions of the world set association policy.

The objective of IASL are:

- to encourage the development of school libraries and library programs throughout all countries;
- to promote the professional preparation and continuing education of school librarians;
- to foster a sense of community among school librarians in all parts of the world;
- to foster and extend relationships between school librarians and other professions connected with children and youth;
- to foster communication and research in the field of school librarianship;
- to promote publication and dissemination of information about school librarianship and materials for children and youth; and
- to initiate and coordinate activities in the field.

IASL is affiliated with IFLA and jointly organizes a book donation program with UNESCO in developing countries.

Many Australians have participated in annual IASL conferences in many parts of the world and as one of the founding countries has been represented by a director since 1971.

Each of these organizations has similar aims for school librarianship. Each enables professional associations to contribute information and influence policy. IFLA represents professional librarians while IASL has a broader membership base, but each provides opportunities for professional development for individuals which is so essential in a changing environment.

Participation in international associations enables Australians to learn from colleagues in both developed and developing countries. It also provides a means of sharing our knowledge and experience from our base of well established school libraries and professional education for teacher librarians.

UNESCO School Library Project in Vanuatu

UNESCO and the Australian National Commission for UNESCO have been active in promoting the development of library services in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly at the school level. The UNESCO Pacific School Libraries Program has included a range of activities both in Australia and in the Pacific. Since 1987, focus has centered on Vanuatu, a country which had expressed a special interest in participating in the program.

At Vanuatu's invitation, a UNESCO sponsored review visit was undertaken with a view of developing a model that could serve as the basis for a plan for future school library developments in countries of the South Pacific. During this visit Primary Advisors, other educational officials at the Ministry of Education, and teachers and principals in a number of schools were consulted.

A range of needs emerged from these interviews. The selection of appropriate materials for school collections in both Anglo-phone and Franco-phone schools was a main concern. Gift books donated from various overseas organizations formed the basis of most primary school collections. However, the supply of such materials was infrequent and not always viewed as relevant. Discussions on this issue resulted in the development of the guidelines, *Selection of Materials for Vanuatu*. Up-to-date resources with a multi-cultural emphasis were highly regarded as were materials developed for those who were learning English or French as a second language.

In 1987, there were no trained school librarians in Vanuatu, and although there were libraries at the junior and secondary schools, there were none in primary schools with one exception. Classroom collections or book rooms were more usual in primary schools. When a collection did exist, a teacher was put in charge. This role was in addition to normal teaching duties and there was no guarantee that this same teacher would have ongoing responsibility for the collection. The concept of the library as the center of learning, the role of reading guidance, the merits of resource-based learning, and the need for children to acquire in-formation skills were generally new ideas for those interviewed.

As a result, there was a belief that before school libraries could develop at the primary school level, teachers must first learn to share more effectively the resources they have with children. Also, those who were in charge of collections (primary schools) or libraries (secondary schools) needed to learn to manage them more effectively.

Recommendations from the 1989 review visit formed the basis of further visits, demonstrations, and workshops in 1989, 1990, and 1991. In 1989, consultants Joe Hallein and Barbara Poston-Anderson visited schools on the islands of Efate, Tanna, Santo, and Malekula. At the primary schools, a specially prepared resource kit was shared and given to each school visited. As the kit was demonstrated, the teachers became more aware of the wide range of ways in which reading and language development could be promoted in the classroom by means of puppetry, sharing picture books, string stories, group reading, and participative storytelling. At selected junior and secondary schools, direct liaison with those in charge of school libraries occurred. As a result, some informal training in school library management was possible.

In 1990, two separate workshops were presented in Vanuatu. The first was targeted at Primary Advisors and, by their request, focused on resources and their use. The workshop dealt with resource-based learning and making use of resources in the environment (such as custom stories, string figures, and expertise in the community). Resources already available within the school were stressed such as the ELPAM (English Language Pacific Area Materials) which had recently been provided to each Anglophone school by AIDAB. The importance of developing information skills in students was highlighted, and less traditional forms of learning, such as drama and readers theatre, were explored. The aim was to provide the Primary Advisors with background knowledge and resources to run a similar workshop with teachers in their own region.

The second workshop was developed for teachers with no previous library training who were in charge of secondary school libraries. Focus was on providing them with the basics of school library management. Selection, acquisition, organization, circulation, and information and resource use were key areas covered.

As a follow-up to these two workshops, the consultants were invited back again in 1991. The Primary Advisors suggested the topic of "The Communicating Classroom." During this workshop, the Primary Advisors created a workbook and video tape to use with teachers to encourage them to help children take a more active role in their own learning. Sessions on information skills and organizing collections were also included. The second workshop provided in-depth sessions in management areas for those secondary teachers who were in charge of school libraries.

Today many of the recommendations made in the initial review visit in 1987 have been met or are in the process of being met. Several organizations, including UNESCO, have been working together with the Vanuatu government in their aim of providing high quality primary and secondary education. Of particular importance to school library development is the fact that one of the Primary Advisors, Inwai Mete, was sponsored by AIDAB to travel to Australia where she received her library training. Now back in Vanuatu she continues to follow through on many of the recommendations, providing valuable local support for the continued development of school libraries.

As a result of the experience in Vanuatu, the following three stage model for school library development in other regions is suggested. First, in stage one, at the invitation of the country concerned, a review visit is undertaken. The purpose of the visit is to consult with those involved in the provision of educational and library services in order to understand and assess the current status of school library development in the country.

Stage two begins with the findings of the review. On the basis of this assessment, plans are jointly made for a school library development program. In Vanuatu, for ex-ample, this follow-up had two main em-phases. The first was to provide input to Primary Advisors on how to help primary teachers best utilize resources in their classrooms. The ultimate aim was to create an awareness of the need for library ser-vices at the primary school level. The second emphasis was to assist those already in charge of school libraries to manage them more effec-tivelly.

Stage three involves continued support. One of the main reasons for the success of the Vanuatu project was the continuity and follow through. Not only did the Australian National Commission for UNESCO provide ongoing funding for a number of years, but the Vanuatu Ministry of Education provided their full support through release of participants to attend workshop sessions and through evaluative feedback as to the appropriateness of sessions. There was time to build on the initial input and follow through on recommendations. As a result, in Vanuatu there is now a recognition of the importance of school library services.

Literacy Programs for Public Libraries in the Southwest Pacific--The Cook Islands Public Library and School Library Services

In November 1990, Joe Hallein and Judy Phillips visited The Cook Islands as part of a Victorian International Literacy Year Grant to try a booklet outlining literacy programs for libraries. The booklet, designed for the use of public librarians in the Southwest Pacific, promoted a rationale for the inclusion of literacy programs through the public library. The booklet has sections devoted to the need for literacy programs, the role of libraries in literacy, suitable resources to use in literacy programs and criteria for resource selection. It also includes a range of activities that can be used with young people when implementing the program.

The booklet is designed to be issued as a hand-book for librarians to devleop literacy programs within their communities. The particular target for the booklet is young people who have left shcool with only basic or inef-fectual literacy skills. The program outlined in the booklet can also be adapted for use with adults.

Many young people in the Southwest Pacific leave school after four to six years with only basic literacy skills which can be lost if they are not used in everyday life, hence the focus in the booklet on the practical applications of literacy and on survival skills. Public libraries can assist these young people in maintaining the literacy skills which have been acquired by developing programs which are both interesting and informative and provide a link with school literacy programs. The public libraries are well suited for this as they are a respected part of community life. This was very evident in the Cook Islands where people gathered every morning to read the papers and discuss local news. The librarian, Mrs. Carmen Te Mata, had a particularly high profile in the community and was very active in promoting reading and information skills with children, not only in the library, but in the local shcools of Roatunga.

The library was situated just off the main street in the heart of the town and opposite the library of the University of the South Pacific and close to the Teacher's College. The public library was therefore well situated to cater to a wide variety of young people. The collection was quite extensive with a separately housed children's section. The bookstock was mainly European which could be seen to be a problem, but with so little published by South Pacific Islanders, this was inevitable. The people of the Cook Islands are extremely religious having been converted to Christianity both by "Baptist" and "The Church of Latter Day Saints" missionaries. Some children were educated in New Zealand while others undertook higher education in the USA. It can be seen then that Westernized culture and the English language were not unknown but formed a part of their every day lives, especially as Bible reading was required of all the congregation both adults and children.

The public librarian, Mrs. Te Mata, ran many formal library programs for teachers both within individual schools and for teachers in training. Formal literacy classes for both adults and young people were also conducted when time allowed. The booklet which had been prepared for trial was designed to help library workers who had no professional library training to develop programs which could be used with individuals and small groups on a formal and informal basis. The main emphasis of the booklet for young peole was survival skills and keeping informed through local and international newspapers.

The main primary school in Roatunga, Nikao Primary School, had a school library and a librarian who was also the principal. The emphasis in this school was in giving the children information skills and encouaraging reading for pleasure. Even though resources were scarce, and the bookstock completely inadequate by Australian standards, the resourcefulness and enthusiasm of the librarian was evident in bright displays, the children's evident pride in their library, the high standard of achievement, and literacy programs operating throughout the school.

Mrs. Louis Henry, the Head Teacher At Black Rock Pre-School, is the wife of the Prime Minister. She was exremely enthusiastic, because even though education is compulsory in The Cook Islands, she realized more could be achieved with greater awareness by teachers of how literacy programs could be adapted to local conditions. These modifications were included in the final version.

The booklet was distributed to public libraries in the Southwest Pacific. An encouraging response came from the University of Papua New Guinea Library School where it has been included in its librarianship training program.

The interaction between Australian school library educators and their overseas colleagues has proven to be of mutual benefit. While Australians have been able to share their expertise with others, they have also become richer by developing an understanding of lib rary and education systems in other countries and have been able to develop a deeper appreciation of other cultures.